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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR KREMER: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor, and members of the body. I know this is getting kind of confusing because of the different bills and the different amendments. And what this really does is just kind of clears everything off. And then this bill also carries the emergency clause because we felt like there is some parts that needed to be clarified immediately. Senator Beutler had questions about the funding and everything. The discussion with...Senator Baker and I kind of cochaired a group of stakeholders last summer and decided that there really are several components in here and we could not put it all in one bill; one with the funding to make up the loss that it looks like we're...the shortfall that we're going to have in order to fund the four that looks like they'll come on line. There was a lot of discussion on if the federal Renewable Energy Act passes, then there is going to be need for a lot more plants, and do we want to put ourselves at a disadvantage to other states because we do not have an ongoing program. So, but we could not really put that into here so we decided to break it down into two parts; one is to address the problem we have right now with four plants, as the funding that is already in statute that we are committed to doing, we're going to be about \$42 million short with the four plants. To address that separately, the funding mechanism in the bill that I introduced last year, LB 736 I believe it was, which is really most of this bill right now, talked about the checkoff raising to 1 cent, and there was a lot of other things in there what should happen if the ethanol, the EPIC Fund would run short. Would it automatically come out of the Highway Trust Fund, or what then? So we decided that we had to address it somehow and we did come up with a consensus of how to address that shortfall, but it's completely different than what it was so we thought it should be a clean bill so that we can have a hearing on it, so that all the parties that are going to be affected could come in and testify with that. So really all this does now, and feel like this had to be done right away, was to clarify some things that were intended in LB, what was it, 7 or 536, that Senator Dierks introduced a few years ago, and we thought at that time it was going to be only two plants, and actually then about 20 applied, but it only looks like 4 are going to make it. So we have to address that shortfall, but in